

THE HARIDASA MOVEMENT

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if he could gain something, Men of higher mind were asked to work for pleasing God. It is true that the teaching was not always understood and led to error in life. This, however, has happened to nearly all teaching since the world began. We do not judge a doctrine by the lives of the people who misunderstood it but of those who understood it. We judge it by what it meant to do and what at least partially it succeeded in doing.

The Haridasa tradition is still alive though not very active. As an attempt to reform orthodoxy from within we can imagine that the movement had to meet peculiar difficulties. In assessing human worth it changed the emphasis from birth to character. In preaching the greatness of the one God it condemned lower forms of worship which the orthodox religion permitted and even accepted into the fold. In placing emphasis on the meaning rather than on the language and taking the best thought to the people it touched vested interests to the quick. Mendicancy even in the name of God seemed to many somewhat of a fall from the dignity which the teachers of the people should claim. That the Haridasa movement was treated with some hostility quite early in its history is evident from the fact that Vaishnavas were soon divided into *Vyasakuta* and *Dasakufa*, meaning the

Vyasa group
and the Dasa group, the former relying on
Sanskrit
texts and older tradition, the latter on the
new teach-
ing on a reformed basis. The movement,
however,
has persisted in spite of opposition and
mendicants of
the order even now go about singing the
songs of
their predecessors.